

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

1-25. (canceled)

26. (Currently amended). Apparatus for determining the coagulation status of a liquid, the apparatus comprising a chamber for holding a quantity of said liquid, a body disposed in the chamber but not fixably attached thereto, and a magnetic device, the magnetic device co-operating with said chamber and being arranged in use to provide a magnetic field which causes the body to migrate to and fro within the chamber through uncoagulated liquid, wherein the body is other than a particle.

27. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein means are provided to detect movement and/or position of the body within the chamber.

28. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 27 wherein the means to detect movement comprises a magnetic field sensor.

29. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the free volume within the chamber when the chamber contains the body is less than 10 μl .

30. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the chamber is formed in a disposable support strip which is removable from the apparatus.

31. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the chamber is elongate and of substantially uniform cross-section.

32. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 31 wherein the chamber is between 3 and 5 mm in length.

33. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the body is elongate and has a cross-section of substantially the same shape as the cross-section of the chamber.

34. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the body is dimensioned in cross-section so that there is a clearance of at least 50 microns between the body and walls of the chamber.

35. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 34 wherein the clearance is less than 300 microns.

36. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the length of the chamber and body may be chosen so that the body can move at least 0.5 mm to and fro within the chamber.

37. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the body can move a maximum of 2 mm to and fro within the chamber.

38. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein the body comprises a material which experiences a force when placed in a magnetic field.

39. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 26 wherein a clotting reagent is disposed in the chamber.

40. (Currently amended). Apparatus for determining the coagulation status of a liquid, the apparatus comprising a chamber for holding a quantity of said liquid, a body disposed in the chamber but not fixably attached thereto, and a magnetic device, the magnetic device co-operating with said chamber and being arranged in use to provide a magnetic field which causes the body to move to and fro within the chamber through uncoagulated liquid, wherein the cross-sectional area of the body measured in a plane generally perpendicular to its normal direction of travel in use is at least half

that of the chamber in the same plane.

41. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein means are provided to detect movement and/or position of the body within the chamber.

42. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 41 wherein the means to detect movement comprises a magnetic field sensor.

43. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the free volume within the chamber when the chamber contains the body is less than 10 μ l.

44. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the chamber is formed in a disposable support strip which is removable from the apparatus.

45. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the chamber is elongate and of substantially uniform cross-section.

46. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 45 wherein the chamber is between 3 and 5 mm in length.

47. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the body is elongate and has a cross-section of substantially the same shape as the cross-section of the chamber.

48. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the body is dimensioned in cross-section so that there is a clearance of at least 50 microns between the body and walls of the chamber.

49. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 48 wherein the clearance is less than 300 microns.

50. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the length of the chamber and body may be chosen so that the body can move at least 0.5 mm to and fro within the chamber.

51. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the body can move a maximum of 2 mm to and fro within the chamber.

52. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein the body comprises a material which experiences a force when placed in a magnetic field.

53. (Previously presented). Apparatus as recited in claim 40 wherein a clotting reagent is disposed in the chamber.

54. (Currently amended). A method of determining the coagulation status of a liquid sample comprising the steps of: providing a sample of liquid in a chamber containing a body not fixably attached to the chamber, and applying a magnetic field to the chamber to cause the body to move to and fro within the chamber through uncoagulated liquid, wherein the body is other than a particle.

55. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 54 comprising the steps of cyclically providing a first and a second magnetic field, said first magnetic field causing the body to move in a first direction and said second magnetic field causing the body to move in a second direction, the second direction being opposite to the first.

56. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 55 wherein each field is provided as a short pulse, with a field free period between the short pulses.

57. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 56 wherein the duration of each pulse is less than 500 ms.

58. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 54 wherein the body is caused to move to and fro within the chamber at a frequency of between 0.1 and 10 Hz.

59. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 54 wherein the magnitude of the magnetic field is less than 25 mT.

60. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 54 further comprising the step of detecting movement and/or position of the body using a magnetic field sensor.

61. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 54 wherein a clotting reagent is disposed in the chamber prior to introduction of a sample to be analysed.

62. (Currently amended) A method of determining the coagulation status of a liquid disposed in a chamber, comprising the step of using at least one magnetic field to detect the movement and/or position of a body not fixably attached to the chamber within said liquid, wherein the body comprises a material which experiences a force when placed in said at least one magnetic field, and further wherein said body is other than a particle.

63. (Currently amended) A method of determining the coagulation status of a liquid sample comprising the steps of: providing a sample of liquid in a chamber containing a body not fixably attached to the chamber; applying a magnetic field to the chamber to cause the body to move to and fro within the chamber through uncoagulated liquid, wherein the cross-sectional area of the body measured in a plane generally perpendicular to its normal direction of travel in use is at least half that of the chamber in the same plane.

64. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 63 comprising the steps of cyclically providing a first and a second magnetic field, said first magnetic field causing the body to move in a first direction and said second magnetic field causing the body to move in a second direction, the second direction being opposite to the first.

65. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 64 wherein each field is provided as a short pulse, with a field free period between the short pulses.
66. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 65 wherein the duration of each pulse is less than 500 ms.
67. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 63 wherein the body is caused to move to and fro within the chamber at a frequency of between 0.1 and 10 Hz.
68. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 63 wherein the magnitude of the magnetic field is less than 25 mT.
69. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 63 comprising the step of detecting movement and/or position of the body using a magnetic field sensor.
70. (Previously presented). A method as recited in claim 63 wherein a clotting reagent is disposed in the chamber prior to introduction of a sample to be analysed.